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Please amend claims 7, 10, 24, 28, 37 and 46 to read as follows.

C1

1 7. (twice amended) A method for producing a chromium(VI)-free conversion layer
2 affording at least the corrosion protection of conventional chromium(VI)-containing yellow
3 chromations, wherein a metallic surface is treated with a solution of at least one
4 chromium(III) complex and at least one salt, said chromium(III) complex having ligand
5 replacement kinetics more rapid than the fluoride replacement kinetics in chromium(III)-
6 fluoro complexes; chromium(III) being present in said solution in a concentration of 5 to 100
7 g/l, said method producing a chromium(VI)-free conversion layer.

C2

1 10. (twice amended) A concentrate for producing a passivation solution for surfaces
2 of zinc or zinc alloys, said concentrate substantially containing chromium(III) for a
3 passivating component, wherein the chromium(III) is present in the form of at least one
4 complex having ligand replacement kinetics more rapid than the fluoride replacement
5 kinetics in chromium(III) fluoro complexes, said concentrate being chromium(VI)-free.

C3

1 24. (twice amended) A conversion layer obtained by a method comprising the steps of
2 immersing a metal surface of zinc or zinc alloy, for an immersion period, in a passivation
3 bath comprising chromium(III) as a passivating component, wherein chromium(III) is present
4 in a concentration of about 5 to 100 g/l, and thereby providing said conversion layer on said
5 metal surface, said conversion layer and said passivation bath each being chromium(VI)-free,
6 said conversion layer presenting a corrosion protection of about 100 to 1000 h in the salt
7 spray test according to DIN 50021 SS or ASTM B 117-73 until first attack according to DIN
8 50961 Chapter 10.

C4

1 28. (third amended) A conversion layer obtained by a method comprising treating a
2 metallic surface of zinc or zinc alloys with a solution of at least one chromium(III) complex
3 and at least one salt, said chromium(III) complex having ligand replacement kinetics more
4 rapid than the fluoride replacement kinetics in chromium(III)-fluoro complexes, said solution
5 being chromium(VI)-free.

C5

1 37. (amended) A conversion layer according to claim 1, having a chromium index
2 greater than 10, the chromium index being defined as the average chromium content in said
3 conversion layer greater than 1% chromium, multiplied by the thickness of said conversion
4 layer.

- Cb
- 1 46. (amended) A method according to claim 21, said immersion period being between
2 about 15 and 100 seconds.

Please add new claims 62 to 65.

- 1 62. (new) A conversion layer according to claim 1, said chromium(III) being provided
2 via a chromium(III) complex having ligand replacement kinetics more rapid than the fluoride
3 replacement kinetics in chromium(III)-fluorocomplexes.

- C1
- 1 63. (new) A passivation bath according to claim 14, said chromium(III) being present
2 in said passivation bath at least in part as a chromium(III) complex having ligand replacement
3 kinetics more rapid than the fluoride replacement kinetics in chromium(III)-fluorocomplexes.

- 1 64. (new) A method according to claim 20, said chromium(III) being present in said
2 passivation bath at least in part as a chromium(III) complex having ligand replacement
3 kinetics more rapid than the fluoride replacement kinetics in chromium(III)-fluorocomplexes.

- 1 65. (new) A conversion layer according to claim 24, said chromium(III) being present
2 in said passivation bath at least in part as a chromium(III) complex having ligand replacement
3 kinetics more rapid than the fluoride replacement kinetics in chromium(III)-fluorocomplexes.

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REMARKS

Applicants' counsel thanks Examiner Koehler for his very careful and thorough examination of the present application. Claims 7, 10, 24, 28, 37 and 46 have been amended to more clearly describe the invention, and new claims 62-65 have been added. No new matter has been entered.

Claim 46 has been objected to because it is drawn to a "passivation bath" but depends from a "method" claim. Applicants appreciate the Examiner pointing out this error, and claim 46 has now been amended to correctly recite a "method according to claim 21."

Claim 37 has been rejected under 35 USC § 112 for indefiniteness because the recited chromium index greater than 10 may be confusing in view of the physical parameters of the conversion layer as recited in claim 2 from which claim 37 depends. Claim 37 has now been amended to depend from claim 1, and it is believed that the confusion noted by the Examiner